UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council extends mandates of United Nations peace-keeping missions in former Yugoslavia; UNPROFOR mandate to terminate on 31 January 1996.

* Secretary-General and President of Benin meet in Cotonou; discuss situations in Sierra Leone and Liberia and problems of West Africa.

* United Nations should play greater role in efforts to achieve just and lasting solution to question of Palestine, speakers tell General Assembly.

* General Committee recommends General Assembly include item on South Africa's unpaid United Nations assessments in current agenda.

* Legal Committee recommends General Assembly establish Preparatory Committee to draft convention creating international criminal court.

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The Security Council today extended the mandates of the three peace-keeping missions in the former Yugoslavia: the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO); the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It did so by unanimously adopting three resolutions.

By resolution 1025 (1995), the Council again welcomed the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, signed by the Croatian Government and the local Serbs on 12 November. It requested the Secretary-General to report by 14 December on all aspects of the establishment of an operation consisting of a transitional administration and a transitional peace-keeping force to implement relevant provisions of the Basic Agreement. The Council decided that, in order to allow for the orderly establishment of that operation, UNCRO's mandate would terminate after an interim period ending on 15 January 1996 or when it had decided on the deployment of the transitional peace-keeping force, whichever was sooner.

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Resolution 1026 (1995) extended UNPROFOR's mandate for a two-month period terminating on 31 January 1996, pending further action by the Council with regard to implementation of the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council invited the Secretary-General to keep it informed on developments in the peace process. It also invited him to report as soon as possible on aspects of the Peace Agreement as they affected the United Nations, in order to enable members to take a decision ensuring an orderly transfer of authority as envisaged in the Peace Agreement.

By adopting resolution 1027 (1995), the Council extended UNPREDEP's mandate for six months to 30 May 1995. It called on Member States to consider favourably the Secretary-General's requests for assistance to the Force in the performance of its mandate. While welcoming the positive role played by UNPREDEP and reaffirming its commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Council also recalled its concern about possible developments which might undermine confidence and stability in the country or threaten its territory. The Council requested the Secretary-General to keep it regularly informed of developments in the country and to report, if possible, by 31 January 1966 on all aspects of the mission.

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On the first full day of his visit to Benin, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with President Nicephore Soglo in Cotonou. They discussed the situations in Sierra Leone and Liberia and conducted an overview of the problems of West Africa.

The Secretary-General later told reporters that he looked forward to representing the United Nations at the Francophone Summit on Saturday. He attached great importance to the Francophonie as a cultural movement which contributed to the democratization of international relations.

In response to a question on Nigeria, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said he was following the situation very closely to avoid its aggravation. Regarding possible sanctions against the country, he said "this depends on draft resolutions which could be adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. At the moment there are drafts being discussed in New York."

In a related development, the following statement was issued by the Secretary-General's Spokesman at Headquarters today:

"It has been brought to our attention that the Nigerian Mission to the United Nations is distributing a letter which alleges that the Secretary-General has requested the sponsors of a draft resolution on Nigeria to postpone the tabling of the draft resolution in the Third Committee, until the outcome of his initiative on the matter. I would like to categorically state that the Secretary-General has not made, and is not planning to make, such a request."

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The United Nations should play a greater role in efforts to achieve a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, speakers told the General Assembly today. The representative of Egypt said that while the United Nations had been unable to achieve a just and lasting peace, it had contributed to a climate favouring the peace process. There was no doubt that the United Nations shouldered special responsibility regarding the question of Palestine, he added.

The representative of Tunisia said it was only natural for the United Nations to be following the negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. He called on the Organization to continue its assistance to the Palestinians in the reconstruction phase and asked donors to fulfil their promises to the Palestinian people. The representative of Yemen called for the United Nations to continue to provide generous aid to the Palestinian Authority so that social and economic development might take place.

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The General Committee today recommended that, because of the political importance of the issue, the General Assembly include in its current agenda an item on the normalization of the situation concerning South Africa's unpaid assessments for United Nations regular and peace-keeping budgets. The Committee also recommended that, due to the financial complexity of the matter, the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) be invited to provide technical observations on a proposed draft resolution by 12 December.

Inclusion of the item was first requested in a letter from South Africa dated 15 September. A memorandum annexed to the letter noted that the country had paid $11 million to the Secretariat on 3 October 1994. That sum represented South Africa's entire assessed contribution to both the regular and peace-keeping budgets from 23 June 1994, the date on which it resumed its seat in the General Assembly. However, a substantial sum remained attributed to South Africa as so-called arrears that were accumulated during the apartheid era, when representatives of the apartheid regime were excluded from participation in the General.

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The General Assembly would establish a preparatory committee to draft a widely acceptable convention creating an international criminal court, by the terms of a draft resolution approved yesterday by the Sixth Committee (Legal). By that draft -- one of six approved as the Committee completed its work for the year -- the preparatory committee would meet from 25 March to 12 April and from 12 to 30 August in 1996 to consider major issues arising out of the draft statute of the court, which was prepared by the International Law Commission.

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The Committee approved a draft resolution on the implementation of Charter provisions relating to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions. By that text, the Secretary-General, at the request of the Security Council, would analyse the effects of sanctions on third States and advise the Council on adjustments that might be made to mitigate their adverse effects.

The General Assembly would express its intention to initiate procedures deleting the "enemy States" clauses from the Charter, by the terms of another draft resolution approved yesterday. The Assembly would also decide that membership in the Special Committee on the Charter should be open to all Member States and that it should continue to operate on the basis of consensus. The draft was approved by 122 votes in favour to none against, with 6 abstentions (Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Libya, Sri Lanka and Sudan).

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